

## Dismantle the School to Prison Pipeline

### PRESS RELEASE

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### Parent Coalition in Gwinnett County Commits to Examination of ICE Impact

On Monday November 16, 2009, the Gwinnett Parent Coalition to Dismantle the School to Prison Pipeline (Gwinnett STOPP) agreed to expand the goals and mission of the organization to include the monitoring of school based arrests, which may be subject to the ICE program in Gwinnett County.

The parent coalition currently monitors data and examines local and state policy that impact:

- the numbers of children removed from the classroom and the duration of their absence.
- overrepresentation of students with disabilities in the disciplinary cycle
- overall student achievement

“Examining a program like ICE and its impact on students in Gwinnett County is a natural fit for our organization. We remain committed to informing parents and stakeholders about how these policies may affect students in our schools”, said Marlyn Tillman, one of the founders of the parent coalition in Gwinnett.

Jennifer Falk, also a founding member of the coalition, will be responsible for setting a strategic course for Gwinnett STOPP as it relates to ICE in Gwinnett County. “The objective is to first determine if and how the ICE program will affect students who are charged with offenses through the school resource officers based in our schools. We have well over 1,000 court reported incidents generated from our Gwinnett schools each year, and many of those incidents are for minor offenses. It is important to monitor the data and have trained advocates in the community who are available to connect students and families with the right resources to protect their civil rights. Regrettably, this measure is necessary because schools have changed school based discipline into *literally* policing student behavior.”

Gwinnett STOPP invites stakeholders who would like to **confidentially** share their stories or concerns to email [gwinnett\\_stopp@yahoo.com](mailto:gwinnett_stopp@yahoo.com). All emails will receive a prompt response.

Gwinnett STOPP was formed in April 2007 to lead a parent-driven, community centered partnership approach to dismantling the school to prison pipeline in Gwinnett County. Growing frustration with the number of schools relying on harsh punishment, and law enforcement to address minor school misconduct led to the formation of the parent coalition. Gwinnett County Public Schools has well over 1,400 children enrolled in alternative schools. Gwinnett’s population has doubled since 1990, while its inmate population has increased six times.

Our Coalition Partners

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